

With the upcoming Fiscal Year 2016 “actual” tax bills being issued the end of December you may need to ask: **“DO I QUALIFY FOR A REAL ESTATE TAX EXEMPTION?”**

While taxes cannot be avoided, some taxpayers may be entitled to partial relief via a “real estate tax exemption.”

What is a real estate tax exemption? A tax exemption is a discharge from the obligation to pay all or a portion of a tax. Exemptions are conferred by the legislature on particular categories of persons or property.

The following clauses apply in Mendon:

Clause 41D of Chapter 59 provides a \$1,000.00 exemption to persons 65 years of age or older who satisfy the following requirements:

1. An individual must be either 65 years of age or older or a joint owner with a spouse 65 years or older as of July 1 of the tax year.
2. An individual must have been continuously domiciled in Massachusetts for the last 10 years preceding the application and have owned and occupied the property or other property in Mass for 5 years.
3. The holder of a “Life Estate” satisfies the ownership requirements.
4. If the domicile is held in a trust, a person must be a trustee or co-trustee and possess a sufficient beneficial interest in the domicile through that trust.
5. Gross receipts, minus an annual social security allowance of \$4523 for the worker and \$2262 for the spouse, must be less than \$24,895. if single, \$37,341. if married (increases annually.)
6. Whole estate cannot exceed \$49,789. if single, \$68,460. if married (increases annually.) The value of a person’s domicile, cemetery plots, registered motor vehicles, wearing apparel & household furniture and effects kept at the domicile should be excluded from the calculation of the whole estate.

Clause 17E of Section 5 Chapter 59 provides a \$234.56 (FY16) exemption to three categories of persons who satisfy certain residency requirements and whole estate or asset requirements:

1. a surviving spouse or a minor with a parent deceased who owns and occupies the property as his/her domicile or a person 70 years or older who has owned and occupied the property as his/her domicile for at least 5 years.
2. A person’s interest in the domicile must be worth at least \$2,000.
3. The holder of a “Life Estate” satisfies the ownership requirement.
4. A persons whole estate, real and personal, cannot exceed \$55,826. (FY16), excluding the value of the subject property, motor vehicle & cemetery plot.

Clause 37A of Section 5 of Chapter 59 provides a \$500.00 exemption provision for blind persons who satisfy the following requirements:

1. Proof of blindness
2. Occupy the property as his/her domicile on July 1 of the tax year.
3. Ownership interest in the domicile must be worth at least \$5,000.
4. The holder of a Life Estate satisfies this requirement.

Clauses 22, 22A, 22B, 22C, 22D and 22E of Section 5 of Chapter 59 provide exemptions to certain veterans (and their spouses or surviving spouses) who were not dishonorably discharged and who satisfy the following requirements:

1. An applicant must occupy the property as his/her domicile on July 1 of the tax year and satisfy ownership requirements.
2. Holder of a Life Estate satisfies the ownership requirement.

*Clause 22 - \$400: (1) Veterans with a wartime service connected disability of 10% or more as determined by the Veterans Administration, or (2) Awarded the Purple Heart, or (3) Gold star mothers and fathers, or (4)

Surviving spouses who do not remarry, or (5) Surviving spouses of World War I veterans whose whole estate does not exceed \$20,000.

- *Clause 22A - \$750: Suffered in the line of duty the loss or permanent loss of use of one foot or one hand or one eye, or received the Congressional Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross, Navy Cross or Air Force Cross.
- *Clause 22B - \$1,250: Suffered in the line of duty the loss or permanent loss of use of both feet or both hands or both eyes.
- *Clause 22C - \$1,500: Suffered total disability in then line of duty and who received assistance in acquiring “specially adapted housing” which they occupy as their domicile.
- *Clause 22D – Full exemption for 1st five years and full up to \$2500 after: Surviving spouses of service members or guardsmen who died from unjury or disease due to being in combat zone, or who are missing in action and presumed dead due to combat.
- *Clause 22E - \$1,000: Suffered total disability in the line of duty and are incapable of working.
Paraplegic – Full Exemption
- *Clause 5L – Gives Massachusetts National guardsmen and reservists deployed outside the state, or their dependents, up to 180 days after that service to pay their property taxes without interest or penalties.

Motor Vehicle Excise Exemptions: All peacetime and wartime veterans as defined in G.L. c. 4, S7 are now eligible for the motor vehicle excise exemptions provided to veterans with certain service-connected disabilities under G.L. c. 60A, S1.

In addition, veterans who have been determined to be permanently disabled by the Medical Advisory Board within the Registry of Motor Vehicles and have been issued disability veteran plates will now be eligible for an excise exemption.

All active military motor vehicle taxpayers.

If you feel you may qualify for any of these exemptions, contact the Assessor’s office and I will be happy to assist you. Please keep in mind that all of the documentation involved in filing for these exemptions is strictly confidential with the Board of Assessors as mandated by Massachusetts General Law.

We look forward to hearing from you.